

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 AID-05
SY-05 MCT-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 A-01 OPR-02 CA-01
OC-06 CCO-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 USSS-00 /128 W
-----070299 101506Z /46

O R 101330Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7535
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 2011

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION, APRIL 10, 1978

REF: BEIRUT 1966 (DTG 061205Z APR 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: CHRISTIANS AND LEBANESE LEFTISTS
EXCHANGED FIRE IN EAST BEIRUT SUBURBS. IN AN APPARENTLY
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UNRELATED INCIDENT, UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE KIDNAPPED BUT
RELEASED A CHRISTIAN IN WEST BEIRUT.
THE CEASEFIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON CONTINUES TO HOLD
GENERALLY. THE FRENCH REPORTEDLY FIRED AT AN UNIDENTIFIED
ARMED MAN. PLO PUBLICLY OFFERED TO NEGOTIATE THE RETURN
OF ISRAELI BODIES AND PRISONERS TAKEN ON APRIL 6. PRIME
MINISTER AL-HOSS CRITICIZED ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL PLAN.

GENERAL KHOURY PLEDGED TO REGAIN CONTROL OF
LEBANON. SA'EB SALAAM REJECTED PARTITION THREATS.

2. FIGHTING IN THE EAST BEIRUT AREA.

A. CHRISTIANS AND LEBANESE LEFTISTS AND PERHAPS
PALESTINIANS EXCHANGED RIFLE AND ROCKET FIRE ALONG THE
TRADITIONAL CONFRONTATION LINE BETWEEN AYN AR-RUMANNAH
AND SHIYAH THE AFTERNOON OF APRIL 9. SIX PEOPLE WERE
WOUNDED, ACCORDING TO AN ADF COMMUNIQUE. THE ADF
INTERVENED AND STOPPED MOST OF THE FIGHTING BY THE
EVENING OF APRIL 9.

B. MORNING OF APRIL 10, EMBOFF OBSERVED ISOLATED
SNIPER FIRE BUT NO SIGNIFICANT FIGHTING. MAIN ROAD
BETWEEN SHIYAH AND AYN AR-RUMANNAH WAS CLOSED TO TRAFFIC,
BUT ELSEWHERE IN EAST BEIRUT AREA LIFE WAS NORMAL. ALSO,
MORNING OF APRIL 10 AN EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE'S CAR WAS
HIT BY A SNIPER IN SHIYAH. EMPLOYEE WAS ALSO
ROBBED AND STRUCK BY ARMED MEN, WHOM HE IDENTIFIED AS
"PALESTINIANS." HE WAS NOT SERIOUSLY HURT.

C. NLP LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN TOLD THE PRESS THAT
"WE WILL DO OUR UTMOST TO PREVENT ANYTHING FURTHER FROM
HAPPENING.."

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3. MILITARY ACTIVITIES.

A. THE CEASE-FIRE CONTINUES TO HOLD GENERALLY IN
SOUTH LEBANON, BUT WITH STILL SOME SCATTERED FIRING.

B. THE 93 FRENCH SOLDIERS AND 35 FRENCH VEHICLES,
INCLUDING 11 PANHARD APC'S, WHICH ARRIVED IN BEIRUT BY
SHIP ON APRIL 6 MOVED TO TYRE ON APRIL 7.

C. ON APRIL 8 FRENCH FORCES NEAR TYRE FIRED AT
AN UNIDENTIFIED ARMED MAN, BELIEVED TO BE A
PALESTINIAN, WHEN HE IGNORED A WARNING TO STOP, ACCORDING
TO LOCAL PRESS. HE WAS REPORTEDLY HIT IN THE LEGS AND
CARRIED AWAY BY COMRADES WHO HAD BEEN HIDING NEAR THE
SCENE. THE FRENCH EMBASSY HERE HAS TOLD US PRIVATELY
THAT THERE IS NO TRUTH TO REPORT IN ISRAELI NEWSPAPER
THAT THREE FRENCH SOLDIERS WERE KILLED. THE POPULAR
DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE
(PDFLP) HAS DISTRIBUTED ANTI-FRENCH LEAFLETS IN SOUTH
LEBANON.

D. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, PALESTINIANS ON

APRIL 8 FIRED LIGHT ARMS AND A BAZOOKA AT SWEDISH FORCES NEAR BURJ RAHHAL, NINE KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF TYRE, AND THE SWEDES RETURNED THE FIRE. THE SWEDISH EMBASSY HERE, HOWEVER, SAYS IT CANNOT CONFIRM THE INCIDENT.

E. AP REPORTED THAT SWEDISH DEFENSE MINISTER ERIC KRONMARK SAID ON APRIL 8 THAT THE SWEDISH UNIFIL CONTINGENT WOULD BE RETURNED TO SINAI DUTY WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. (SWEDISH EMBASSY HERE HAS TOLD US THAT SWEDEN WOULD WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS AS SOON AS UNIFIL CONTINGENT WAS BROUGHT UP TO FULL STRENGTH, BUT THAT NO TIMETABLE FOR WITHDRAWAL HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED.)

4. KIDNAPPING.
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UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE KIDNAPPED A CHRISTIAN ACCOUNTANT BEHIND THE BRISTOL HOTEL ABOUT 1615 HOURS ON APRIL 9, ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE SOURCE. HE WAS RELEASED ABOUT 2400 HOURS, AFTER HAVING BEEN BEATEN. THIS INCIDENT WAS APPARENTLY NOT RELATED TO AYN AR-RUMANNAH/SHIYAH FIGHTING.

5. PLO COMMENTS ON RETURN OF ISRAELI BODIES.

OFFICIAL PALESTINIAN SPOKESMAN MAHMOUD LABADI TOLD REPORTERS IN BEIRUT ON APRIL 8 THAT THE PLO HAS AGREED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE ICRC THE RETURN OF BODIES OF FOUR ISRAELI SOLDIERS KILLED AND ONE CAPTURED IN LEBANON ON APRIL 6. (HE SAID THE LATTER WAS RECOVERING FROM A GUNSHOT WOUND IN THE ARM.) Wafa, HOWEVER, AFFIRMED THAT NO INFORMATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO THE ICRC UNTIL ISRAEL LISTED THE NAMES OF THE LEBANESE LEFTISTS AND PALESTINIANS KILLED OR TAKEN PRISONERS IN THE INVASION LAST MONTH. ACCORDING TO OTHER SOURCES, THE PLO WANTS TO EXCHANGE THE ISRAELI BODIES AND PRISONER FOR THE PALESTINIAN BODIES AND PRISONERS RESULTING FROM THE MARCH 11 TERRORIST ATTACK IN ISRAEL.

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SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 USSS-00 /128 W

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O R 101330 APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7536

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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6. HOSS AND TUENI CRITICIZE ISRAEL WITHDRAWAL PLAN.

A. IN THE FIRST OFFICIAL LEBANESE REACTION TO ISRAEL'S PLAN FOR A PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL, PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS ON APRIL 8 ACCUSED ISRAEL OF RESORTING TO "PROCRASTINATION AND EVASION IN AN ATTEMPT TO AVOID WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON." HE DEMANDED TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.

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B. LEBANON'S AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N., GHASSAN TUENI, TOLD TOLD RADIO LEBANON THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD PROPOSED A QUICKER TIMETABLE FOR ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL. HE SAID THE ARAB STATES WOULD SEEK ANOTHER SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING TO CONSIDER SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL "UNLESS ISRAEL APPLIES THE U.S.-SPONSORED TIMETABLE."

7. KHOURY PLEDGES TO REGAIN CONTROL OF LEBANON.

SPEAKING TO A NEW GROUP OF SOLDIERS WHO TOOK THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE ON APRIL 8, ARMY COMMANDER KHOURY SAID THAT,

"YOU WILL MARCH OVER EVERY INCH OF LEBANESE TERRITORY TO WHICH WE SHALL CLING FOREVER." HE ADDED: "WE HAVE TAKEN THE OATH THAT WE HAVE NO RELIGION BUT LEBANON, NO SECT BUT THE INTEGRITY OF LEBANON."

8. SALAAM REJECTS PARTITION THREATS.

FORMER PRIME MINISTER SA'EB SALAAM ON APRIL 8 REJECTED IMPLIED CHRISTIAN THREATS OF PARTITION. SALAAM SAID: "IS THIS A SLIP OF THE TONGUE OR A BIT OF POSTURING? WHATEVER IT IS, I HOPE EVERYONE WILL RETURN TO THE RIGHT PATH." SALAAM WAS REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO STATEMENTS MADE THE DAY BEFORE BY PHALANGE PARTY LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL AND AN ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT MARONITE DEPUTIES, WHO HAD WARNED THAT THE REFUSAL OF MOSLEM POLITICIANS TO OPPOSE THE ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON WAS LIKELY TO STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THOSE WHO ADVOCATED PARTITION. (IN TURN, GEMAYEL AND THE INDEPENDENT MARONITES HAD MADE THEIR STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO SALAAM'S REJECTION OF A SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON.) PARKER

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